



منظمة الأغذية
والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food
and
Agriculture
Organization
of
the
United
Nations

Organisation
des
Nations
Unies
pour
l'alimentation
et
l'agriculture

Organización
de las
Naciones
Unidas
para la
Agricultura
y la
Alimentación

CONFERENCE

Thirty-fourth Session
Rome, 17-24 November 2007
FIRST REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

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A. Agenda for the Session ¹

1. The General Committee examined the Provisional Conference Agenda contained in document C 2007/1 and noted that, following the proposal made by Switzerland, there will be an additional Sub-item 25.7 under Item 25 "Any Other Matters" entitled *Reports of the International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Interlaken, Switzerland, 3-7 September 2007) and of the Eleventh Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Rome, 11-15 June 2007)*. The Committee recommends that the Provisional Agenda, including the additional sub-item proposed by Switzerland, be adopted by the Conference, and that the additional item be considered by Commission I.
2. Having noted that the Provisional Agenda included subjects on which information documents were tabled, the Committee also recommends that delegates wishing to comment on these documents be given an opportunity to do so under Item 25 "Any Other Matters".

B. Establishment of Commissions and Tentative Timetable of the Session ²

3. At its Hundred and Thirty-second Session the Council formulated proposals concerning the organization and timetable for the Thirty-fourth Session of the Conference. These proposals were communicated to all FAO Members and observers in document C 2007/12-Rev.1. The Committee recommends that the Conference establish two commissions to consider and report on the "Substantive and Policy Matters in Food and Agriculture" and "Programme and Budgetary Matters" sections of the Agenda respectively.
4. The Committee recommends that the Conference approve the Tentative Timetable proposed by the Council. It is understood that this Timetable may be subject to modifications according to progress made in the Plenary and in the Commissions.
5. The Committee noted that, since His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI would be granting an Audience for Conference participants on the morning of Thursday 22 November, Plenary proceedings would not begin until 15.00 hours on that day.
6. The attention of the Conference is drawn to the fact that, in order to accommodate requests for speaking time, the duration of each intervention should not exceed five minutes.

C. Appointment of the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of the Two Commissions ³

7. In accordance with Rules VII and XXIV-5(b) of the General Rules of the Organization (GRO) and as indicated in document C 2007/LIM/8, the Council at its Hundred and Thirty-third Session proposed the following candidates as chairpersons of the Commissions:

Commission I: Ambassador Christer Wretborn (Sweden)

Commission II: Ambassador Mario Arvelo Caamaño (Dominican Republic)

¹ C 2007/1; C 2007/INF/4; C 2007/INF/23; C 2007/12-Rev.1;

² C 2007/12-Rev.1

³ C 2007/LIM/8

The Committee recommends that the Conference adopt the Council's proposal.

8. In accordance with Rule X-2 (c) GRO the Committee recommends that the Vice-chairpersons of the Commissions be as follows:

Commission I: Abdelmalek Tittah (Algeria)

Ms Hedwig Wögerbauer (Austria)

Commission II: James Melanson (Canada)

Yaya Olaniran (Nigeria)

D. Resolutions Committee

9. The Council at its Hundred and Thirty-second Session had recommended the establishment of a Resolutions Committee of the Conference consisting of seven members, one from each FAO region⁴. The Criteria for Conference resolutions as well as the functions and operating procedures of the Resolutions Committee are described in document C 2007/12-Rev.1, Appendix C.

10. The Committee recommends that the following Member Nations, identified by the region to which they belong, form the membership of the Resolutions Committee:

Africa	Madagascar
Asia	Philippines
Europe	Italy
Latin America and the Caribbean	Paraguay
Near East	Egypt
North America	Canada
Southwest Pacific	Australia

Delegations of the countries concerned are requested to communicate to the Chairperson of the Conference, as early as possible, the name of their representative on the Resolutions Committee.

E. Admission of Observers from Applicants for Membership and Associate Membership⁵

11. As is customary, the Director-General has provisionally invited applicants for membership and associate membership to be represented by observers until a decision has been taken on their application. The Conference will wish to confirm the invitations in respect of the Principality of Andorra, the Republic of Montenegro (Applicant Members) and the Faroe Islands (Applicant Associate Member).

⁴ C 2007/LIM/4

⁵ C 2007/10

F. Admission of New Member Nations and Associate Members ⁶

12. In conformity with the provisions of Rule XIX of the General Rules of the Organization, the applications for membership by the Principality of Andorra, the Republic of Montenegro and the Faroe Islands (Associate Member) had been received by the deadline of 18 October 2007.

13. Under Article II-2 of the Constitution, the Conference decides on the admission of additional Member Nations and Associate Members by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast, provided that a majority of the Member Nations of the Organization is present; “votes cast” means affirmative and negative votes and does not include abstentions or defective ballots (Rule XII-4(a) of the General Rules of the Organization-GRO). Membership becomes effective on the date when the Conference approves the application.

14. The Committee recommends that the Conference hold the vote for the admission of the Principality of Andorra, the Republic of Montenegro and the Faroe Islands at the plenary meeting on the afternoon of Saturday 17 November. The result of the vote will be announced later in the same meeting, followed by the admission ceremony. As is customary, the Chairperson will welcome the new Members, which may make a brief statement.

G. Contributions of New Member Nations and Associate Members

15. In accordance with Regulation 5.8 of the Financial Regulations, the Conference determines the amount of the contribution to be paid by the newly admitted Member Nation or Associate Member, beginning with the quarter in which the application is approved.

16. According to the established principles and customs, the minimum contribution due from the new member for the last quarter of 2007 and the advance to be made to the Working Capital fund are provisionally:

Nation	Contribution Last Quarter 2007		Working Capital Fund Advance	
	EURO	US \$	EURO	US \$
Principality of Andorra	2,209.76	2,206.64		2,000.00
Republic of Montenegro	441.95	441.33		250
Faroe Islands	1,591.02	1,588.78		

H. Appointment of the Independent Chairperson of the Council ⁷

17. By the date determined by the Council, i.e. 7 September 2007, one nomination had been received for election to the office of Independent Chairperson of the Council, namely: Mr. Mohammad Saeid Noori Naeini (Islamic Republic of Iran). This nomination was notified to all Members by circular letter K/CF 4/3(a) of 14 September 2007.

18. Under the terms of reference of Rule XXIII-1(b) GRO, the General Committee determines and announces the date of the election. The Committee recommends that the election be held on Friday 23 November in the afternoon.

⁶ C 2007/10

⁷ C 2007/9; C 2007/12-Rev.1

I. Election of Members of the Council ⁸

19. Rule XXII-10(a) GRO provides that the Conference, on the recommendation of the General Committee, shall, not later than the end of the third day of the Conference Session, decide the date of election of members of the Council and the date by which nominations must be submitted.

20. The Committee accordingly recommends that:

- the election be held on the afternoon of Friday 23 November; and that
- nominations for the Council seats to be filled at the present session be communicated to the Secretary-General of the Conference (B-202) by 12:00 hours on Saturday 17 November 2007 at the latest, to permit the General Committee to communicate to the Conference the valid nominations received at least three working days before the date selected for the election in accordance with Rule XXII-10(d) GRO.

21. In this connection, the Conference will note in particular the following provisions of paragraphs 3, 4, 5 and 7 of Rule XXII of the General Rules of the Organization:

“3. In selecting Members of the Council, the Conference shall give due consideration to the desirability of:

- i) including in its membership a balanced geographical representation of nations interested in the production, distribution and consumption of food and agricultural products;
- ii) ensuring the participation in the work of the Council of such Member Nations as contribute in a large measure toward the success of the Organization;
- iii) giving to the greatest possible number of Member Nations an opportunity, by rotation of membership, to serve on the Council”.

“4. Member Nations shall be eligible for re-election”.

“5. No Member Nation shall be eligible for election to the Council if it is in arrears in payment of its financial contributions to the Organization in an amount equal to or exceeding the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years”.

“7. A Member of the Council shall be considered to have resigned if it is in arrears in payment of its financial contributions to the Organization in an amount equal to or exceeding the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years, or if it has not been represented at two consecutive sessions of the Council”.

22. The Committee notes that the Russian Federation deposited an instrument of acceptance of the FAO Constitution on 11 April 2006 and, pursuant to Article XXI.4 of the Constitution, became a Member of the Organization on that date. The Committee recommends that, for the Council elections on Friday, 23 November 2007, the Russian Federation, the Principality of Andorra and the Republic of Montenegro be in the FAO Europe Region, and that the distribution of other Member Nations by region remain as shown in document C 2007/11, which provides all relevant information concerning the seats for which nominations must be submitted and the forms for submitting nominations.

⁸ C 2007/11

J. Right to Vote

23. The General Committee notes that the following 23 Member Nations have not paid sufficient amount of their assessed contributions to retain their vote in the Conference:

Member Nations with Potential Voting Rights Problems as at 16 November 2007

Member Nation		Consolidated Arrears Expressed in US\$	Consolidated Contributions Due for Two Preceding years	Minimum Payment required to Ensure Vote in US\$
1	Antigua and Barbuda	\$ 337,785.52	\$ 19,184.74	\$ 318,601.78
2	Argentina	\$ 30,077,344.62	\$ 8,125,144.38	\$ 21,952,201.24
3	Burundi	\$ 95,258.77	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 87,620.73
4	Central African Republic	\$ 217,054.20	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 209,416.16
5	Comoros	\$ 279,352.58	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 271,714.54
6	Costa Rica	\$ 207,065.49	\$ 195,716.44	\$ 11,350.05
7	Democratic Republic of Congo	\$ 49,720.10	\$ 26,762.49	\$ 22,958.61
8	Dominican Republic	\$ 257,149.97	\$ 226,409.20	\$ 30,741.77
9	Gambia	\$ 75,640.46	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 68,002.42
10	Guinea-Bissau	\$ 107,063.20	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 99,425.16
11	Iraq	\$ 6,105,452.22	\$ 577,115.65	\$ 5,528,337.57
12	Kyrgyzstan	\$ 875,291.70	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 867,653.66
13	Liberia	\$ 323,897.80	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 316,259.76
14	Nauru	\$ 18,663.58	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 11,025.54
15	Nicaragua	\$ 150,379.76	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 142,741.72
16	Palau	\$ 10,809.08	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 3,171.04
17	Sao Tome and Principe	\$ 276,573.20	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 268,935.16
18	Sierra Leone	\$ 119,253.53	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 111,615.49
19	Solomon Islands	\$ 43,776.77	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 36,138.73
20	Somalia	\$ 352,477.20	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 344,839.16
21	Sudan	\$ 55,988.80	\$ 53,685.24	\$ 2,304.56
22	Tajikistan	\$ 146,008.45	\$ 7,639.03	\$ 138,370.42
23	Turkmenistan	\$ 458,603.44	\$ 30,692.76	\$ 427,911.68
		\$ 40,640,610.39	\$ 9,369,296.42	\$ 31,271,336.97

24. Article III.4 of the Constitution states: “A Member Nation which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contribution to the Organization shall have no vote in the Conference if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the two preceding calendar years. The Conference may, nevertheless, permit such a Member Nation to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member Nation”.

25. The General Committee, on Tuesday, 20 November, will consider on a case-by-case basis the right to vote of the countries in arrears listed in paragraph 23. In the meantime, however, the Committee recommends to the Conference, in accordance with past practice, that all Member Nations in attendance be authorized to vote on Saturday 17 November 2007 on the understanding that contacts with those in arrears shall be continued with a view to regularizing their situation. The Committee also expressed its concern at the large number of Member Nations in arrears.

K. Right to Reply

26. At its previous sessions, the Conference had decided that, if delegates wished to reply to criticisms of their Governments, they should preferably do so on the day on which such criticisms had been voiced after all those wishing to participate in the discussion had had an opportunity to speak.

27. The Committee recommends that these same arrangements be followed at the present session.

L. Verbatim Records

28. Rule XVIII-1 GRO lays down that verbatim records shall be kept for all Conference plenary and commission meetings. The right of delegates to check the accuracy of the record of their interventions is recognized in Rule XVIII-2 GRO.

29. The accuracy of the records may be maintained either by correcting typing and other errors, or by amending a word or phrase actually used. In practice such corrections or amendments to statements are accepted only from the delegation which made the statement, and should be submitted within 48 hours of publication of the draft verbatim record concerned.

30. In 1961 a procedure was formally adopted by the Conference whereby speakers who so desire may have their statements inserted in the record without delivering them in plenary. This procedure is still followed and is recommended in the interests of saving time.

31. While the Committee sees no objection in principle to the insertion of statements in the records when time does not permit them to be delivered, it recognizes the difficulties which might arise if no occasion is given to delegates to exercise the “right of reply” to any criticism of their government’s policy made in the inserted statement.

32. The Committee therefore recommends that the Conference continue to permit the insertion of such statements on condition that:

- a) the Plenary, or the Commission concerned, is informed by its Chairperson that a statement not actually delivered, or a substantive addition to a statement that has been delivered, is being inserted in the record;
- b) the text handed over to the Chairperson for insertion should preferably be in digital format and in English, French or Spanish;
- c) the provisional verbatim record containing the additional statement is circulated at least three days before the close of the Session; and
- d) delegations attending the Session are able to avail themselves of the right of reply by having an opportunity to make, prior to the close of the Session, a statement relating to the inserted statement.

M. Statements by Heads of Delegations

33. The Committee recommends that a list of speakers be published daily in the Journal of the Conference, in the order in which they will be called upon by the Chairperson, and further recommends that statements be limited to a maximum of five minutes.

N. Admission of Observers from Intergovernmental and International Non-Governmental Organizations ⁹

34. The list of Intergovernmental and International Non-Governmental Organizations which have been invited by the Director-General to be represented in an observer capacity at this session of the Conference is given in document C 2007/13. The invitations sent to Intergovernmental Organizations with which FAO does not have a formal agreement and to International Non-Governmental Organizations which do not have consultative status with FAO are extended on a provisional basis and are subject to approval by the Conference.

35. After having reviewed this list, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm the said provisional invitations.

O. Statements in Plenary Meetings of the Conference by International Non-Governmental Organizations having Consultative Status

36. The Committee was informed of requests from the following International Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with FAO, to address the Plenary of the Conference:

the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP)

37. Having examined this request, the Committee, in accordance with Rule X-2(g) of the General Rules of the Organization recommends that the Conference grant speaking time not exceeding four minutes to the above mentioned organizations on the understanding that they will not be given priority in speaking over representatives of FAO Members.

P. SPECIAL EVENTS¹⁰

38. The Committee recommends that five High Level Special Events be held during the Conference Session, as follows:

- The Role of Aquaculture in Sustainable Development, Monday 19 November 2007 from 14.30 to 17.30 hours;
- Forests and Energy, Tuesday 20 November 2007 from 14.00 to 17.00 hours;
- The Financing of Agriculture, Tuesday 20 November 2007 from 18.30 to 20.30 hours;
- Food Quality and Safety, Wednesday 21 November 2007 from 10.30 to 12.30 hours;
- Aid for Trade and Food Security, Wednesday 21 November 2007 from 14.30 to 16.30 hours.

The Co-chairs of each Event should subsequently report to the Plenary on the conclusions reached at their respective Event and a summary of these conclusions be added in annex to the final report of the session.

⁹ C 2007/12-Rev.1; C 2007/13

¹⁰ C 2007/12-Rev.1

Q. Informal Meeting of Observers from Non-Governmental Organizations

39. The Council at its June 2007 session recommended that, as at previous sessions of the Conference, observers from Non-Governmental Organizations be invited to attend an informal meeting, so that their advice and suggestions on the Organization's activities and programmes may be communicated to the Conference. It is suggested that this meeting take place on Saturday 17 November. The Committee recommends that the Conference accept this proposal.

R. Attendance by Liberations Movements

40. In conformity with the suggestion made by the Council at its Hundred and Thirty-second Session, the Palestine Liberation Organization has been invited to attend the Conference in an observer capacity. The Committee recommends that the Conference confirm this invitation.

S. Conclusion

41. Lastly, the Committee recommends that the Conference confirm all the detailed arrangements for the session and that, the normal working hours for meetings of both Plenary and Commissions be 09.30 to 12.30 hours, and 14.30 to 17.30 hours with the exception of Saturday 17 and Thursday 22 November when the afternoon meetings are expected to begin at 15.00 hours. The Committee also invites all delegations to observe the working hours with the maximum punctuality.